THE EYE:

BY OBADIAH OPTIC.

——*VARIOUS OBJECTS FROM THE SENSE,*
VARIOUSLY REPRESENTING. MILTON.

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Ver adeo frondi nemorum, ver utile silvis,
Ver tument terræ et genitalia semina poscunt. VIR.

The spring adorns the woods, renews the leaves,
The womb of earth the genial seed receives. DRYDEN.

NO season of the year has more happily called forth the descriptive power of the poet, the investigations of the philosopher, and the cheering observations of the divine, than *spring:* To the poet it has been a spirit of inspiration; the grove is filled with melody, the garden puts on its dress of various colours, the green meadow, the babbling brook, the budding trees, the genial showers, the whispering winds, the gently descending dew, the birds uniting in pairs, are but a very few selected from the many subjects which the poetic muse contemplates with ever new delight.

The author of the "Seasons" has, in my opinion, very happily succeeded in describing *spring;* his views were all drawn from nature, executed with a refined taste and a very comprehensive judgment; indeed, so completely has he performed the task, that his followers may, it is true, give some new arrangements, and please with their harmony of numbers and choice of epithets, but little, very little, can they add to the original stock.

I never read his invocation, but with increasing delight; it is inimitably beautiful—

Come, gentle SPRING, etherial mildness, come,
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
While music wakes around, veil'd in a shower
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend.

The double invocation in the first line, is peculiarly happy; we are led immediately, by the methaphorical conversion of

spring into etherial mildness, to a consideration of the subject; the poet takes hold of our judgment, and enlists it in his favour, perhaps than this nothing is more necessary either for the prose writer or the poet.

His picture of *spring* descending from the bosom of a dropping cloud in a shower of roses, is philosophically true, and highly picturesque; I do not remember to have met with any thing equal to it in any language or author with which I am acquainted.

In this number, I shall only mention one other beautiful passage of this delightful poem; it is his address to the DEITY, which is as full of piety as it is of beauty:—

HAIL, SOURCE OF BEING! UNIVERSAL SOUL,
Of heav'n and earth! ESSENTIAL PRESENCE, hail!
To THEE I bend the knee; to THEE my thoughts
Continual climb; who, with a master hand,
Hast the great whole into perfection touch'd.
By THEE the various vegetative tribes,
Wrapt in a filmy net, and clad with leaves,
Draw the live æther, and imbibe the dew:
By THEE dispos'd into congenial soils,
Stands each attractive plant, and sucks and swells
The juicy tide, a twining mass of tubes:
At THY command the vernal sun awakes
The torpid sap, detruded to the root
By wint'ry winds; that now in fluent dance,
And lively fermentation, mounting, spreads
All this innum'rous-colour'd scene of things.

In this elegant apostrophe, the following is in my opinion, truly sublime,

——————Who, with a master hand
Hast the great whole into *perfection touch'd.*

It has been generally allowed, by good critics, that the expression of MOSES, "Let there be light—and there was light," belongs to the true sublime; and the sublimity of it, says Dr. BLAIR, arises from the strong conception it gives of an exertion of power producing its effect with the utmost speed and facility. In examining the expressions of THOMSON and MOSES, I am constrained to give my opinion in favour of the former: MOSES gives a "Let there be" for every great class of things; but THOMSON, with a single touch, brings the great whole into perfection. Indeed, I think a greater ex-

ample of sublimity cannot be produced from any author, ancient or modern. But in this beautiful address, not only are found true traits of an exalted poetic genius, but true philosophy and scriptural divinity; the filmy nets in which the vegetative tribes are wrapt, their drawing the æther and imbibing the dew, the attractive power of the plants, their sucking the juicy tide through all their twining mass of tubes, and all this performed by the instrumentality of the sun at the command of DEITY, open a field sufficiently large to occupy the attention of the most ingenious philosopher in the delightful study of nature.

The divine, also, in the consideration of this passage, will find himself irresistibly carried forward to contemplate the glorious joys of a resurrection state, whilst he meditates on the winter, in which all the external coats of seeds die and return to dust, yet finds that the vital, seminal principle remains, and springs forth into open day, in renovated vigour and encreased splendour; he is immediately led to reflect, hath GOD, the universal parent, thus cared for the preservation of the most minute seed, so that nothing can be lost, and will he not take care of his rational offspring? Assuredly he will; and thus reflecting, will not each of us be led to join with the pious WATTS, in the following beautiful lines:—

My flesh shall slumber in the ground,
Till the last trumpet's joyful sound;
Then burst the chains with sweet surprise,
And in my SAVIOUR's image rise.

O. OPTIC.

ORIGINAL.

THE TORTOISE.—No. VII.

"Vice ever reigns where Fashion is adored."

IT is not uncommon for persons who engage in literary, as well as other pursuits, to promise much, which they either forget or neglect to perform; it is not so with TRUEMAN, his word may be depended on; tho' no author himself, he proffered his assistance to me; and to his industry in selecting from his manuscript book, am I indebted for the following:—

* * * * * * * * * * *

—— ON the green carpet, with which Nature had covered her hallowed fields, beneath the friendly branches of an oak which produced a wide-spreading shadow, I lay down to re-

fresh my strength, which was relapsed by the fervid beams of a summer sun; nor was I long free from the somnific power of sleep, but my wakeful mind was excursive in the regions of fancy:—I imagined myself translated, by the mysterious power of a winged messenger, to the gay haunts of fashionable life; a splendid edifice attracted my view, whither thronged multitudes, who seemed almost frantic with anxiety to pay their adorations at the shrine of the goddess to whose honour it was erected: Still, retaining my rustic habit, they seemed not to notice or regarded me with an air which bespoke their feeling superiority. My attendant conducted me to the vicinity, from whence I could behold the scenes which passed, without being disturbed.

It was night, but the temple was illuminated with innumerable lamps, in which burned lights of variegated colours, reflected by a vast number of the clearest mirrours; these produced a brilliant effect, tho' I could perceive they so injured the sight of some, as to subject them to many inconveniences, whilst they so blinded others, as to render them unable to avoid the dangers which in many places presented; the court was adorned with the most splendid decorations, and the garden bloomed with the most beautiful flowers;—all seemed gay—the music played the most enchanting airs, and the dance was joined with cheerful alacrity; a stream wound its course and ran meandering thro' the domain, at which the votaries of the goddess sought refreshment, and thence retired into the garden, from whence I could perceive none return.

At a sight so extraordinary, my admiration was excited, and turning to my attendant, surely, said I, these are they who pass from pleasure to bliss! Dost thou then think, BERUTHA, said he, that because a transient gaiety animates the scene, these whom thou seest are exempt from sorrow? Undoubtly, I replied, for whither can those go who refresh themselves at the stream, but to participate joys still more exquisite! Thou shalt see, said he, and immediately we were transported to a small eminence, from whence I could distinctly view their transition; and here, horrour seized my mind at the sight of those who had first engaged in the service of the temple, perishing with hunger and thirst on a barren heath, exposed naked to the scorching rays of the sun!—I averted my eyes from this scene of wretchedness—and my attendant called my attention to a group where each seemed mad with rage, urged by one more subtile than the rest, aided by a figure whose appearance spread

horrour around, murdering each other, whilst others were driven by a ghastly fiend, to a prodigious precipice from which they fell to rise no more!

My soul sickened at the terrific prospect, and again turning to my attendant, I enquired the meaning of these things.—The edifice, said he, which first caused thy wonder, is the temple of *Fashion*, to which her votaries press with eager expectation of happiness; thou didst notice the effect those dazzling lights produced on the sight of those who entered, and the many trivial dangers which are not discernible by those who devote themselves to the goddess—but here thou beholdest more plainly, the consequences resulting to those who sacrifice to this profane shrine—a while they enjoy the giddy round of unhallowed pleasures, and drinking of that intoxicating stream which meanders thro' her fairy domains, until their faculties are inebriated, they pass into her impervious forest, for such is that which appeared to thee as a delightful garden; here, *Want*, who inhabits the place, seizes the bewildered fugitives, strips them of their clothing and leaves them to perish, without a friend to alleviate their sufferings or administer to their necessities, whilst *Envy* and *Revenge* urge the more hardy to destroy each other, and *Despair* drives the less resolute to the precipice of ruin, whence they plunge into the sea of misery which surrounds the place.

I was again about to question my attendant, when a loud noise caused me to start—the sea had made a breach in its banks, and with a tremendous force rushed along the foot of the eminence, overwhelming the temple and the votaries of Fashion—my attendant was gone—the shock awoke me from my slumber.

TIM TITULAR.

ORIGINAL.

A TALE WITHOUT A NAME.

(continued from page 143)

HENRY'S mind became again perplexed with the thoughts of futurity; at last, with a heavy heart, he summoned sufficient courage to speak to his revered patron on the subjects which had lately occupied his imagination: He was heard with regret and anxiety, but not with surprise; he knew, that to a generous mind, the idea of independence was a favourite one, yet, while he acknowledged the justness of the sentiment, and

the general justice of the arguments, he would not allow himself to be convinced that they were applicable to the present case: Why, my son, said he, should we separate, have I not enough of this world's wealth for me and thee? why should you toil amidst scenes of trouble and danger, for that which you may here enjoy at ease, and in innocence? is not she here whom your heart has, I know, selected for its dearest resting place when I shall be no more? perhaps I may never see you more; the grey moss of age covers my head, and the current of life flows languidly through my veins; who have you to guide your youthful steps in those difficult paths where even the experienced sometimes loses his way and gropes in darkness to the end of his life? cannot you remain here and enjoy that happiness I have enjoyed in this delightful solitude, whence I can look back in safety, at the perils and misfortunes I have encountered in this busy world, and tread the downward path of life in peace and serenity? To all this HENRY only answered, let me go and carve out my own fortune; let your instructions be my guide, and my sister, (for he would not give up the *name*) my ultimate object, she, like the bright star that unerringly directs the way-lost traveller and adventurous mariners amidst their trackless paths, to the destined point, shall be my remembrancer, when my feet may incline to deviate from those paths, which virtue and you have taught me to tread; I see life from a different point of view, and would advance like the bright orb that gilds the morning, travelling in splendour to the zenith of his glory, to that independence which is the darling of my soul, and thus deserve thy esteem, and CONSTANTIA'S love: You, my dear father, as in his setting hour he gilds the eastern hills and floating clouds, and retires in awful dignity to rest, and seems to point to those paths he lately trode, would, by the goodness and serenity of your age, prove how your youth has been passed. Spite of his sadness, Mr. BENTON could scarcely forbear smiling at the loftiness of his language; finding him determined, the amiable old man submitted, but was not convinced; he was silent, but not satisfied.

After an affectionate parting with CONSTANTIA, in which more was said than we have time to repeat, he departed from the scenes of his early days for *Philadelphia*; but scarcely could he refrain his tears, when he saw the last cloudy speck of the distant mountains, which still remained in view, he almost regretted he had left the tranquil scene; but the attentions which the recommendations of Mr. BENTON procured him, dis-

sipated his regret; he now commenced the study of that science which was to raise him to the proud eminence after which his romantic soul sighed so fervently: For some time all proceeded as he wished; his studies diligently attended, his mind became enlarged, he found the ignorance which had enveloped him fast dissipating; his erroneous notions of men and things became rectified by the lessons of experience, and as he became acquainted with many young persons of both sexes, he was able to perceive those singularities in his manners, which his solitary education had generated; it is true, he was not very well satisfied with the picture which he drew of his acquaintances; he found, that though better skilled in all the elegancies of life, they fell far short in that rigid virtue which he thought necessary to form a good character; if their amusements were numerous, the temptations to which they were exposed were increased in the same ratio; if their politeness was greater than his own, their sincerity was less; if their knowledge was more various it was less profound: He thought that the preponderance of virtue was on the side of those who had, like him, been educated in retired simplicity, tho' not in ignorance; but he forgot that their number was small, he fell into the error to which wiser men have adhered, that the country was the scene of simplicity and virtue, and cities that of refinement and vice—a point yet unsettled; however, I will not tire my readers with my observations, but let him speak for himself; I will therefore give one of the many letters he wrote to his sister and let each draw his own inferences.

* * * *

"The more I see of this city and these people, the more I am surprised, and in part gratified; the vast collection of houses (though I have read of places that contain more) seem innumerable; when I pass thro' the streets my eyes are continually wandering from one to another, and every where I see new beauties; but I find the inhabitants pass every thing of the kind without seeming to observe them, and my friends laugh at me for my curiosity, but I cannot help indulging it, though I find the disposition to do so, wears away gradually; I have as yet made but few acquaintance, I feel an awkwardness, or as my friends term it, *bashfulness*, hanging about me when I am ushered into the gay societies, where I am sometimes introduced, and often think the ladies bite their lips to preserve their gravity; it is indeed impossible to see, without surprise, the boldness with which my companions join these societies,

with what ease and confidence they converse with those who compose them; I have often attempted it, but have as often failed; and yet, my CONSTANTIA, my father did not leave the chambers of my brain untenanted; I think I am not vain when I say I believe I possess more real knowledge than many of them; they indeed tell me sometimes, that I am too wise to make my way in company, that it is necessary to trifle, that conversation of a serious nature is not suited to the capacity of young ladies; sometimes I am inclined to believe them (with one exception) for when the merits of a new song, a new singer, a new player, a new fashion, or indeed a new dancer, or new dress, become the subject of discussion, they can all say something to the purpose, but I am silent and ignorant; but when I would introduce an historical subject, when I compare the conduct of persons of the present age with that of some celebrated character of former ages, they generally acquiesce in the justness of my remarks, but make no other observation on it; if I tell them of the manner in which I passed my time in your and my father's society, they listen attentively, but hold down their heads to conceal the smiles that play upon their rosy lips; and yet, my CONSTANTIA, when I consider how easy it is to acquire knowledge here, I cannot help doubting their ignorance, particularly as in the remotest solitude you have acquired so much; they say our hours must have lagged heavily along; but did *we* find that they did? I have much to learn, but thou wilt be the wished reward of all my toils, and if they procure me this happiness, I shall consider them as trifling; and yet, when I think of the happy hours we have passed together, our daily rambles, our nightly concerts, our delightful conversations, the grand and sublime scenery which surrounded us, the little inexpressible somethings which can scarcely be committed to paper, but appear painted in vivid colours to the eye of remembrance; when I think of my father's goodness, and most of all, of you, I almost wish myself at your side—but—independence—there is a charm in that word which restores to me my reason, and makes me, though I regret the loss of these enjoyments, strive with more diligence to hasten the period when they will return.

HENRY BENTON."

But all these feelings were softened by time, he gradually became more polished, and added to the attainments of a scholar, the elegance of the gentleman; he was no longer laughed at as the country beau, but admired as a man of

taste and fashion. There was one of his female acquaintances whose beauty made her a dangerous rival to CONSTANTIA, nor must the reader suppose him guilty of fickleness; this lady had, from the first moment of their acquantance, perceived and esteemed the solid worth which lay concealed beneath his rustic appearance and manner, and treated him with a respect, which won his esteem; nor was she insensible to his personal attractions; his fine form rose to a majestic height, his limbs were formed in nature's choicest mould, nor were they inactive, he was not a mere moving figure, there was a life, a spirit in all his actions, which at once evinced the agility and the vigour of his frame, an expression in his countenance which proved that he possessed a soul full of intelligence. *(to be continued)*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EYE.

MR. OPTIC,

BRIEF histories, or anecdotes of customs with which we are not acquainted, however trifling they may be in themselves, become interesting by their peculiarity, and the recital seldom fails to please: Sneezing, an act so common as to pass, at the present day, almost without notice, was, in a former period of time, made a subject of considerable importance, and followed by a formal salutation: The origin of this custom, says father Feyjoo, some Catholics have attributed to an ordinance of Pope St. Gregory, who, it is said, instituted a short prayer to be used on such occasions, at a time when a pestilence raged, the crisis of which was attended with *sneezing*, and, in most cases, followed by *death*.

The Jewish Rabbins have a traditionary tale, that, before the time of Jacob, men never sneezed but *once*, and then immediately died; and also, that that patriarch obtained the revocation of this law, the remembrance of which was ordered to be preserved in all nations, by a command of every prince to his subjects, to employ some salutary exclamation after the act of sneezing.

Doubtless these accounts are alike fabulous, the pious fictions of pious men, both because, continues Feyjoo, the enquiries of Aristotle concerning this strange circumstance, and the allusions to it in Apulcius, Petronius, Pliny and others, prove it to have existed many ages prior to St. Gregory; and a memoir of the French academy of sciences relates, that it

was found practised in the new world, on the first discovery of America. This is not only said to be a fact, but some writers, give us an amusing account of the ceremonies which attend the sneezing of the king of Monomotapa—Those who are near his person when this happens, salute him in so loud a tone, that those who are in the anti-chamber hear it, and join in the acclamation; those who are in the adjoining apartments do the same, until the noise reaches the street, and becomes propagated throughout the city; so that, at each sneeze of his majesty, results a most horrid cry from the salutations of many thousands of his vassals.

That a custom, so universally prevalent, should have no plausible reason for its support is rather curious. **

SELECTED.

STRIKING INSTANCE OF MONTESQUIEU'S BENEVOLENCE.

A GENTLEMAN, being at Marseilles, hired a boat with an intention of sailing for pleasure; he entered into conversa- with the two young men who owned the vessel, and learned, that they were not watermen by trade, but silversmiths, and that when they could be spared from their usual business, they employed themselves in that way to increase their earnings. On expressing his surprise at their conduct, and imputing it to an avaricious disposition "Oh sir," said the young men, "if you knew our reasons, you would ascribe it to a better motive. Our father, anxious to assist his family, scraped together all he was worth, purchased a vessel for the purpose of trading to the coast of Barbary, but was unfortunately taken by a pirate, carried to Tripoli, and sold for a slave. He writes word that he is luckily fallen into the hands of a master who treats him with great humanity; but that the sum which is demanded for his ranson is so exorbitant, that it will be impossible for him ever to raise it; he adds, that we must therefore relinquish the hope of ever seeing him, and be contented that he has as many comforts as his situation will admit. With the hopes of restoring to his family a beloved father, we are striving by every honest means in our power to collect the sum necessary for his ransom, and we are not ashamed to employ ourselves in the occupation of watermen." The gentleman was struck with this account, and on his departure made them a handsome present.

Some months afterwards, the young men being at work in their shop, were greatly surprised at the sudden arrival of their father, who threw himself into their arms; exclaiming at the same time that he was fearful they had taken some unjust method to raise the money for his ransom, for it was too great a sum for them to have gained by their ordinary occupation. They professed their ignorance of the whole affair, and could only suspect they owed their father's release to that stranger to whose generosity they had been before so much obliged.

After MONTESQUIEU's death, an account of this affair was found amongst his papers, and the sum actually remitted to Tripoli for the old man's ransom. It is a pleasure to hear of such an act of benevolence performed even by a person totally unknown to us: But the pleasure is infinitely increased, when it proves the union of virtue and talents in an author so renowned as MONTESQUIEU.

REMARKABLE TRAITS OF VANITY IN LITERARY CHARACTERS.

VOITURE was the son of a vintner, and like PRIOR, was so mortified, whenever reminded of his original occupation, that it was said of him, that wine which cheered the hearts of men, sickened that of VOITURE. JOHN BAPTIST ROUSSEAU, the poet, was the son of a cobler, and when his honest parent waited at the door of the theatre, to embrace his son on the success of his first piece, the inhuman poet repulsed his venerable father with insult and contempt. AKENSIDE ever considered his lameness as an insupportable misfortune, since it continually reminded him of his origin, having been occasioned by the fall of a cleaver from one of his father's blocks, a respectable butcher. MILTON delighted in contemplating his own person; and the engraver not having reached our sublime bard's "ideal grace," he has pointed his indignation, in four iambics. Among the complaints of POPE, is that of "the pictured shape." Even the strong minded JOHNSON would not be painted "blinking Sam." Mr. BOSWELL tells us that GOLDSMITH attempted to shew his agility to be superiour to the dancing of an ape, whose praise had occassioned him a fit of jealousy, but he failed in imitating his rival.

THE prudence of the best heads is often defeated by the tenderness of the best hearts.

Poetical Department.

ORIGINAL.

STANZAS,

ON SEEING A YOUNG LADY AFTER HER RECOVERY FROM A SWOON.

HAST thou ne'er seen the blooming rose,
When angry storms obscur'd the sky,
Its loveliest qualities diclose,
With diffident humility?

Hast thou ne'er seen the lily fair,
When howl'd the inauspicious blast,
Recline amid a milder air,
Till the rude hurricane were past?

Hast thou ne'er seen the glorious sun,
When clouds condens'd, the east invest,
Peep from the veil, his course to run,
In recent pride and beauty drest?

Hast thou ne'er seen the drooping dove,
When calm seren'd the troubled skies,
Exultant, while her heart beat love,
And liveliest pleasures beam'd her eyes?—

Then view this picture—see that bed,
Each image has its emblem there;
The Graces round sweet ANNA spread
Their choicest gifts divinely fair.

Renew'd, more bright her beauties shine;
In sprightlier flow her spirits move;
Her looks are charming; smiles divine;
Her voice is melody and love!

May ANNA, of these traits possess'd,
Health, growing with her years, enjoy—
Long be her life—may she be bless'd
In time, and in eternity!

EDWIN.